

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS

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NP10>NICARAGUA/U.S./>BROKAW: President Reagan warned today of what he called a

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>AID>new danger, support for the leftist government of Nicaragua from Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. Chris Wallace reports tonight the president see that as still another reason why we should renew our support of Nicaragua's anti-Sandinista rebels, the contras.

WALLACE: The Reagan administration today expressed deep concern that Iran may be trying to export its brand of terrorism to Central America. The president signalled that concern by listing Iran for the first time as one of the radical forces backing the Nicaraguan government.

RONALD REAGAN: A new danger we see in Central America is the support being given the Sandinistas by Col. Khadafy's Libya, the PLO and most recently the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran.

WALLACE: What's worrying the U.S. is that Iranian Prime Minister Mousavi is now on a three-day visit to Nicaragua. American officials say he is in charge of terrorism for Khomeini. They call him the kingpin, and they speculate he may be arranging to export suicide-style terrorism from the Mid East to this hemisphere. U.S. intelligence sources also say Iran is preparing to send Nicaragua a large shipment of captured Iraqi weapons. The president brought up the Iranian connection today as he tried to put pressure on Congress to resume funding for the anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua. REAGAN: Countering this by supporting Nicaraguan freedom fighters is essentially acting in self defense.

WALLACE: Despite this new threat, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar says Congress won't restore covert aid for the rebels, but Secretary of State Shultz told Lugar today he will come up for a new funding approach. SEN. RICHARD LUGAR (D-Ind.): A new formula is not at hand, but I can assure everybody that it is being worked on, creatively and intensively.

WALLACE: The key point, U.S. officials say, is that Reagan is determined to help the anti-Sandinista rebels, whether that means dealing with Congress or alerting the public to a new Iranian threat. Chris Wallace, NBC News, at the White House.